

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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CINCLANT FOR POLAD

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TAGS: PGOV PINT ECON ELAB BF
SUBJ: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

1. PLP LANDSLIDE IN BAIN'S TOWN

PLP CANDIDATE NORMAN GAY SWEEPED THE BAIN'S TOWN BY-ELECTION JULY 19. HE RECEIVED 895 VOTES, TO 59 FOR THE FNM AND 18 FOR THE FLEDGLING VANGUARD PARTY. ALTHOUGH DR. GAY'S VICTORY WAS EXPECTED, SOME OBSERVERS HAD THOUGHT THAT BREAD-AND-BUTTER ISSUES IN THE ECONOMICALLY DEPRESSED BAIN'S TOWN AREA MIGHT CUT INTO THE PLP'S POPULARITY. THIS HAS NOT OCCURRED. THE SIZE OF THE VICTORY SEEMS ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE EMOTIONAL APPEAL THE PLP STILL MANAGES TO EXERT AND TO INDEPENDENCE EUPHORIA, RATHER THAN TO DR. GAY PERSONALLY. IT ALSO APPEARS THAT THE RADICAL RHETORIC AND STREET CORNER POLITICKING OF THE VANGUARD PARTY HOLDS NO ATTRACTION FOR THE AVERAGE BAHAMIAN, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING.

2. ANOTHER BY-ELECTION IN THE OFFING?

THERE ARE REPORTS THAT SCHERLIN BOOTLE, PLP REPRESENTATIVE FOR ABACO (THE OTHER MP IS INDEPENDENT ERRINGTON WATKINS),
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WILL RESIGN FROM THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY BECAUSE OF ILL HEALTH.

BOOTLE'S VICTORY IN THE LAST YEAR'S GENERAL ELECTION WAS CONTROVERSIAL AND EXTREMELY CLOSE, AND A BY-ELECTION NOW WOULD GIVE THE PLP A FAR TOUGHER FIGHT THAN BAIN'S TOWN DID.

3. PRICE CONTROL LINE RISING

THE GOVERNMENT'S PRICES COMMISSION IS HAVING A HARD TIME HOLDING THE LINE ON PRICE CONTROLS. THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING A RECOMMENDATION OF THE PRICES COMMISSION TO REPLACE THE FIXED PRICE CEILINGS ON BREADBASKET ITEMS (SEE NASSAU'S A-92) WITH A PERCENTAGE MARK-UP SYSTEM. LOCAL WHOLESALERS CLAIM THEY HAVE RUN OUT OF SOURCES FROM WHICH THEY CAN PURCHASE AT LEAST THREE BREADBASKET ITEMS (CHEESE, FLOUR AND RICE) AT PRICES WHICH MEET THE GOVERNMENT-IMPOSED CEILING. THE WHOLESALERS ARE NOW THREATENING TO LET THEIR CURRENT STOCKS RUN OUT UNLESS THE GOVERNMENT ACTS.

THE AUTO DEALERS HAVE BEEN THE FIRST TO WIN A REVISION OF THE MARCH 28 CONTROLS. THOSE CONTROLS RESTRICTED THE DEALERS' MARK-UP ON CARS AND PARTS TO 25 PERCENT OF THE LANDED COST PLUS TAX. THE MARK-UP ON PARTS HAS NOW BEEN RAISED TO 65 PERCENT. THE PRICES COMMISSION THIS WEEK ALSO ASKED THE GOVERNMENT FOR A FOUR CENT PER GALLON HIKE IN GASOLINE PRICES. LOCAL RETAIL PRICES ON GASOLINE HAVE BEEN FROZEN SINCE EARLY 1971 AT 65 CENTS PER GALLON FOR 100 OCTANE, 60 CENTS FOR PREMIUM AND 55 CENTS FOR REGULAR.

4. PHONE COMPANY AND UNION REACH AGREEMENT

THE BAHAMAS TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION AND THE PHONeworkERS UNION SIGNED A TWO-YEAR WAGE PACT JULY 5. THE AGREEMENT WAS RATIFIED BY THE RANK AND FILE JULY 18 AND HOPEFULLY WILL END AT LEAST TEMPORARILY A SERIES OF WILDCAT STRIKES AND PERSONAL BITTERNESS BETWEEN TELEPHONE MANAGEMENT AND LABOR. SPEAR

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